

ST. PETERSBURG, September 24, 1907.

BOTH in Russia and in Germany there has been a tremendous increase in the number of suicides among children in recent years. It is far more prevalent in these two countries than among the people of any other nationality.

It is well known that throughout the civilized world suicides among adults are increasing. The reasons for this are not far to seek. They are found in the growing complexity and strenuousness of modern life, the decline of religious faith and the discontent of poor folk with their lot, stimulated by the glaring contrasts between poverty and riches.

Any one who has looked life in the face has some comprehension of the causes which impel so many men and women to make an exit from a world in which they have ceased to find life worth living. But to form any conception of the state of mind which leads children to kill themselves is difficult. There is something so infinitely pitiful and tragic about the suicide of a child that the mere contemplation of it stuns the mental faculties. It is so grossly unnatural. There is no record of a little heathen savage ever taking his life.

Isolated cases may be attributed to something abnormal in the mental and moral make-up of the child that terminates its own existence. But when they occur in such numbers as they do in Russia and Germany it is proof that there is something radically wrong in the conditions to which childhood is subjected in those countries. These conditions differ greatly. It would be hard to find two countries which present such striking contrasts as Russia and Germany. The latter is probably the most highly organized state in Christendom. Pretty near everything is done there according to some system nicely calculated to produce the best results. In Russia nothing is systematized. It is a species of happy-go-lucky chaos that exists here. And yet the perfection of system in one country and the absence of it in the other lead to an appalling number of juvenile self-murders.

Prof. Chlopin, a lecturer at the Women's Medical Institute at St. Petersburg, when speaking of this shocking epidemic recently, stated that 237 cases of actual suicides and ninety-five cases of attempted suicide had been examined. These figures, terrible though they are, are smaller than those given by Prof. Eulenberg of Berlin for his country. He has within the last twelve years traced 1,152 cases of children who have actually committed suicide, more than half of whom were driven to this desperate act by failure to pass examinations and by overwork at school. The terrible part about it is the reflection that the speaker being a German and, therefore, accurate in his statements, no room can be left for exaggeration.

The figures given for Russia embrace a much shorter period—five years—but what lends such an appalling emphasis to them is the fact that they do not by any means represent the whole sum of child suicides committed during that time. It is impossible to get even approximate statistics for Russia because the head masters and mistresses of the schools in which these tragedies occur hush them up to such an extent that probably not one-fourth of them get into the newspapers. As I have indicated, the causes that underlie these epidemics of youthful self-destruction are as different in both countries as are the characteristics of the two races who inhabit them.

In Russia the question is far more complicated, but even here, where callousness prevails, a few people have realized that this problem must be looked into. Nobody is more alive to the dangers of such a state of affairs than M. Kauffman, the new minister of education. Now and then, it is said, trustworthy reports are being drawn up for his eyes alone. Were it possible to learn their contents the world would be horrified by the accounts of juvenile demoralization and suffering they contain. Some facts have leaked out in spite of the reserve of the minister of education and have supplied the following statistics and details:

Of the cases reported of child suicides

Making Children Suicides.

Bad Educational Systems of Russia and Germany.



STRANGLED HERSELF WITH HER OWN HAIR

and attempted suicides committed within the past three years to per cent took place among children attending or supposed to be attending schools. More than 78 per cent of these attempts resulted in death. During the time under consideration, owing to the thousands of revolutionaries distributed among the schools by the revolutionary parties, shooting has been the favorite means, 69 per cent killing themselves with firearms. Next in favor comes hanging among boys and poisoning among girls. During the past half year thirteen boys and eighteen girls are registered as having poisoned themselves. This compares favorably with the first half of the school year, when the number of suicides by hanging was thirty-six. On the other hand, the number of suicides by shooting was fifty-six, or ten more than during the previous half year.

No figures as to suicides by hanging are to hand, but it appears to be the favorite method for boy and girl prisoners when no other means are available, though in August last a schoolboy of seventeen cut his throat in Lupin prison by means of a spoon, which he had sharpened in some unknown way. It is stated that of child suicides 58 per cent were committed by girls whose ages ranged from fourteen to eighteen. In the lower forms suicide is almost unknown.

These figures refer only, and even then imperfectly, to those governments lying west of the Urals. The mind recoils before the thought of the possible sum for the whole empire if the hushed-up cases were brought to light and the faked-up reports set straight.

And the reasons for this terrible epidemic? They are officially stated as being "mental derangement" and "nervous disorders." One thing is certain—overwork at school, in the ordinary meaning of the term, has nothing to do with it. For the past three years examinations and lessons have been a farce in Russian schools. Professors are at the mercy of their pupils, who hold political meetings, pass absurd resolutions and decide whether or not this master shall be allowed to give them instruction. One school in Petersburg went on strike and demanded a smoking room and the abolition of marks. The scholars got what they wanted. Few masters are bold enough to send a refractory pupil from his class or keep him in after school hours. Those who do so end in begging their pupils' pardon, forced usually to do so by the headmaster under threats of dismissal.

Religion, which used to influence the scholars' conduct to a certain extent, is of no avail. No threats of priestly censure have the least effect upon them. In many

schools the pupils have sent the priests away, saying that religion is an exploded myth and quite unnecessary for "young Russia." The boys and girls who would attend the classes for religious instruction are overpowered by the terrorist faction and keep away for fear. In a school in Moscow the priest, dismissed by his pupils, appealed to the other masters. At first a minority took the pupils' part, but the others soon sided with them and the priest was told that his services at the school were no longer wanted.

The boys and girls in all schools held political meetings where only socialistic masters are admitted and where the discussions generally end in a free fight. The globes, rulers, books and inkpots fly about instead of words till the police interfere and take the warriors off to the police station. It is by no means an uncommon sight in Russian towns to see bands of from thirty to fifty school boys and girls, surrounded by soldiers, walking through the streets. They look proud of themselves because a foolish government takes them seriously.

This sort of thing causes many of the child suicides through mental derangement brought on by too much political activity. Instead of leading the lives of healthy children they are allowed to have the excitement that grown-up men and women often find too much for them. From the moment these children get into a scrape for playing at politics they leave all childish things behind them. They may be kept under lock and key for a few hours only and then sent back to their homes. But the mischief is done. The government in taking them to prison has made martyrs and heroes of them. They boast of their "political experiences" to their playfellows, who do their best to become "heroes" too.

With the more excitable ones the end comes quickly. It is here that the seeds of suicides are sown. Their immature brains, weakened by over-excitement, give way under the strain which so much "political work" entails. They are ready for every extravagance, every act of madness that may suggest itself. It is the crying sin of the revolutionary parties that these children are chosen to do the most horrible work—to kill officials, policemen, etc. Some of them commit the crimes assigned to them; others, rather than take another's life, put an end to their own.

Only a couple of weeks ago a schoolgirl was found shot in a hotel in Odessa. She left a note in which she said that she had been delegated to throw a bomb at an official. She knew the man and his daughter. Her heart failed her at the last moment and she shot herself, knowing that



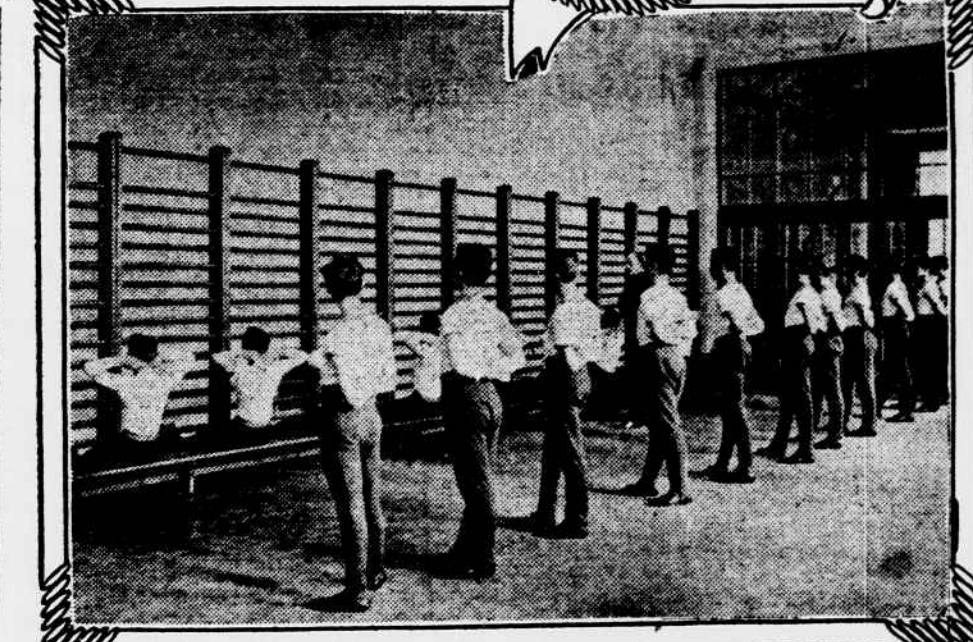
M. KAUFFMAN

the "party" would kill her for disobeying their orders. She was barely sixteen. A short time before that a schoolboy of the same age shot at an officer at Ladom, a town in the extreme west of the empire. He ran away, but seeing that his pursuers would catch him shot himself through the heart.

On the same day a girl, Marya Feodorovna, killed herself in a cell in the fortress of St. Peter and Paul. What was her history? She attended school at Petersburg, got mixed up with the "politicians" there, was arrested for having illegal literature about her and placed in a cell to await her trial. One day when the warden took in her dinner he found that she had strangled herself with her hair, which she wore in a long plait. Here we have at the same time at three different points of the empire, north, south and west, three cases of children committing suicide because they were confronted by problems that ought not to enter into the lives of such young creatures.

Unhappily, such cases are so common that people who are not closely connected with them give them but a passing thought. Last May a case occurred in a Warsaw school of a boy who, thinking he would do good to the community at large by ridding the world of an unpopular headmaster, shot at him, missed, turned the revolver against himself and blew his brains out. He was fifteen and a half.

In August three schoolboys at Zambkowie, aged nine, ten and twelve, respectively, held a "court-martial" on a comrade eleven years old, whom they accused of



PUPILS OF THE "SCHOOL OF RIGHTS"

theft. They found him guilty, sentenced him to death and hanged him on a tree in a forest. Four days afterward his body, in a decomposed state, was found and the boys confessed. Does this not point to a terrible state of demoralization, of barbarity?

These cases occurred among children who attended the middle schools, born of poor or but moderately well-to-do parents. They are due directly to the revolution; to the excitement and subversion of morals caused by the anarchical state of government. But

there are suicides in the schools where the higher officials, the aristocracy and the rich send their children—classes where politics have no place and the revolutionary movement is detested. The "School of Rights," the Eton of Russia, has sent some twenty boys into the world during the past year. Of these five have committed suicide, one in the mines in Siberia for striking an officer in the face, and the rest have been rejected for the army and navy as physically unfit.

The verdict on the suicides was "mental

derangement brought on by excessive dissipation." They were all under seventeen. As soon as they entered the school they began to "see life." Sports are unknown among scholars of this class. Their masters have no sympathy with them. At twelve these young gentlemen begin to gamble with the rest of clubmen of forty. At fourteen they begin to frequent the fashionable cafes and make merry with women. If they skate it is only with ballet girls. Others "bore" them. Vices which shall be nameless are rampant in the school. The results are easy to foresee. In a year or two, when they ought to be vigorous young men, they are worn out, morally and physically. Life has nothing to offer them. They put an end to it. With the hope of checking the process of physical deterioration the school authorities last year started a gymnasium with qualified instructors.

In the girls' school things are little better. The boys and girls who escape this general contamination are, as one would expect them to be, too serious. They go to the other extreme. Thus it is that the rising generation of Russia has no youth, no real happiness, no safety worth the name. The wonder is really not that there are so many suicides among them, but that their number is not far greater.

If in Russia the evil may be put down to too little discipline, the reason for it in Germany is too much. The German scholars are treated as though they were soldiers, with the difference that they have lessons instead of drill, and are compelled to study from morning to night. They have no time to be young. Perhaps this is why so many of them grow tired of life. Anyway, about a hundred children in Germany commit suicide every year and this without any revolution, any morbid excitement to strain their brains or demoralization to poison their minds and bodies. They begin work at 8 o'clock in the morning. At midday they pause for dinner. After that they return to school for two or three hours, according to the number of languages they learn. Then, on their return home, they have five or six tasks to prepare for the next day. Unless very quick the unhappy little scholar must pore over his books till bedtime. He has no games and no time to himself but on Sunday, when he goes with his parents to the beer-hall and listens to a German band.

Every half year come those terrible examinations at which failure means disgrace and another six months in the same class. At this time the suicides are most frequent. The muddled little brains overworked for six months, cannot answer the questions put before them. Bad marks are put down and the victim of over-education goes home and hangs himself.

Germany is a great and industrious country, but there are more adult suicides there than anywhere else—except in Russia. A man who has known no childhood grows up pessimistic. His life has had no sunny morning. The burden of the noonday is too hard to bear. He goes under in the struggle. Those who want to found model schools should steer clear of two European dangers—the Seylla of Russia and the German Charybdis—for there is something radically wrong in the systems which breed suicides in such numbers.

SERGEI VOLKHOVSKY.

Notification of Births.

From the London Sanitary Record.
A great public reform is at stake. The state expects to gain in the lives of thousands of children, and it seeks to obtain this benefit by imposing an onerous obligation on thousands of hardworking doctors who labor among the poor often for the scantest and most uncertain remuneration. Is it unreasonable that the state should pay for the service rendered to the state?

W. B. MOSES & SONS, F St., Cor. 11th.

W. B. MOSES & SONS, F St., Cor. 11th.

October Carpet Sale.

Remnants of All Kinds of Carpets.

We've assembled on our second floor annex 360 remnants in lengths sufficient for at least one room. They go at remnant prices—positively the lowest figures we've ever quoted on like grades of goods.

The savings you realize are substantial, and the carpets are not only the best Bigelow, Hartford, Smith & Sons and others, but the best and most salable patterns in these makes.

The sale starts tomorrow and will prove the greatest in value giving this bargain room has ever known.

Brussels Carpets, suitable for any room and halls and stairs. Regular 75c grade. Sale price..... **57½c**
Extra Quality Brussels Carpets, in patterns suitable for parlor, dining room, chambers and halls and stairs. Regular 90c quality. Sale price..... **67½c**
Genuine Wilton Carpets—durable as iron—guaranteed to give satisfaction. At least 20 beautiful patterns suitable for parlor, library, dining room, hall and stairs. Regular values, \$2.25, \$2.50 and \$3.00. Sale price..... **\$1.77½**
Wilton Velvet Carpets—the entire stock in the sale. A variety of pretty patterns, suitable for parlor, chambers, dining room, halls and stairs. Regular prices, \$1.25 and \$1.30 yard. Sale price..... **\$1.12½**
Royal Plush Wilton Carpets—the guaranteed quality—some very choice patterns, suitable for dining room and hall and also for offices. Regular price, \$1.75 yard. Sale price..... **\$1.20**
Moresque Wool Brussels Carpets—very durable. A variety of pretty hall and stair patterns. Regular 75c quality. Sale price..... **57½c**
Roxbury Smith & Stinson Extra Quality Brussels Carpets—the best 10-wire quality. A line of beautiful patterns, suitable for parlor, dining room, chamber and hall and stairs. Regular \$1.10 quality. Sale price..... **87½c**

Extra Heavy Wool Moresque Brussels Carpets, suitable for dining room and hall and stairs. Regular 90c quality. Sale price..... **67½c**
Velvet Carpets—extra fine quality. A number of pretty patterns to select from. Regular \$1.00 quality. Sale price..... **77½c**
Velvet Carpets in a variety of good patterns to select from. Regular price, \$1.15 yard. Sale price..... **87½c**
Splendid Wool Velvet Carpets, in many good, choice patterns, suitable for most every room and halls. Regular price, \$1.25. Sale price..... **\$1.07½**
Smith Axminster Carpets—many choice patterns to go in the sale. Regular price, \$1.25 yard. Sale price..... **89c**
Alex. Smith, Bigelow, Hartford Axminster Carpets—a choice variety of patterns to select from, suitable for parlor, bedroom and halls. Regular prices, \$1.25, \$1.50 and \$1.75 yard. Sale price..... **\$1.12½**
Beautiful Moresque Brussels, in red, green, blue and tan, with pretty band borders to match. Unusually pretty for bedrooms. Regular value, \$1.25 yard. Sale price..... **87½c**
Bigelow, Hartford and French Axminster Carpets—a splendid variety to select from, with borders to match. A chance to pick up a big bargain in a guaranteed carpet. Patterns suitable for parlor, dining room, library and chamber. Regular values, \$1.85 and \$2.00 yard. Sale price..... **\$1.27½**

October Sale of Bedding and Linens.

We will sell Blankets, Quilts, Bed Spreads, Pillow Slips, Table Linens, etc., without profit this month. We want you to know this department well and are forcibly directing attention to it. Profit by your opportunity.

W. B. Moses & Sons, F St., Cor. 11th.

anecdotes Concerning Well-Known People.

No Chesterfield.

A Christian Scientist of Boston was praising the late Earl of Dunmore. "He was a good Christian Scientist and a good man," said the man. "Tall and robust and supple. I can see him still with his short gray beard and his kind face. His one fault—a fault due to his aristocratic upbringing, no doubt—was the exaggerated value that he set upon correctness. He insisted on correctness in eating, in dress, in everything."

"At a dinner in Beacon street last year I heard him tell a story about an incorrect self-made man, or 'nouveau riche,' as he called him. 'This man was dressing one evening to go out. His wife hustled into the room before he started to look him over. 'But, George,' she said, reproachfully, 'aren't you going to wear your diamond studs to the banquet?' 'No. What's the use?' George growled. 'My napkin would hide 'em anyway.'"

Wanted in Smyrna.

Israel Ludlow, the aeronaut whose experiments with flying machines have so greatly impaired his health, still perseveres in his aeronautical researches, and one day he said: "I hear my accident patiently. It happened, no doubt, because it was to happen. I shall keep on with flying. I am something of a fatalist, I suppose." He missed a moment. "You know how profoundly they believe in fate in the east? Here there is a story that they tell about it. 'There is a certain sultan was giving audience one morning when the grand vizier came and presented himself. The sultan said to him, 'Rise, vizier,' said the sultan, graciously, 'and tell me why are you so pale, and why do you tremble so?' 'Alas, lord,' the vizier answered, 'in that shadowy corner by the ivory screen the Angel of Death is standing. For a long while he has stood there, and continually he tries on his own earnest and strange look.' 'The vizier wrings his hands. 'Lord, I would not die,' he said. 'Lord, grant me permission to set out forthwith for Smyrna. Thus, it may be, I will escape the dreadful visitant.' 'The sultan, with a nod, granted the vizier that wish and the poor man hastened forth with all speed to make ready for the journey. Then the sultan beckoned the vizier to him. 'Art thou,' he said, 'truly the Angel of Death?' 'Yes,' replied the vizier, indifferently. 'The sultan nodded his head. Then he said, gravely: 'Why hast thou looked with such strange earnestness at my vizier?' 'Because,' said the vizier, 'I wondered what he was doing here, for I have orders to kill him in Smyrna.'"

Too High.

"The autumn," said Eben H. Emery, New York's weather forecaster, "is by far our finest American season. Foreigners visiting

us should invariably come in the autumn." Suddenly Mr. Emery smiled. "I am reminded of an old autumn song," he said. "A thousand leaves are falling, 'tis the way it begins. 'A lady at the church concert rose to sing this song. 'A thousand leaves are falling,' she caroled, and then her voice broke into a scream, and she had to stop, for she had pitched the song too high. 'Start her at 500,' shouted an auctioneer from the gallery.'"

A Caddy's Joke.

James Anderson of the Scottish-American Golf Club smiled at a poor player on the Van Cortlandt Park links in New York. "He reminds me of a chap I used to know," said Mr. Anderson. "This chap played so badly that even his caddies made a butt of him. 'He got a ball badly bunkered one day, and do what he would, he couldn't get it out again. Whack, whack, whack he went, missing every time. 'Hang it,' he said, 'I have tried all my clubs on this confounded ball. What on earth am I to do now?' 'The caddy laughed harshly. 'Give it a swat with yer bag,' he said."

An Ingenious Question.

Frederick Starr, the University of Chicago professor of anthropology, described at a dinner a wonderful native boy whom he had met in his African travels. "This boy," said Prof. Starr, "often saw me reading, and the process at once interested and perplexed him. Through an interpreter one day he questioned me about it. 'Reading again, sir?' he asked. 'Yes, my boy,' said I. 'Well, sir, I have often seen you reading. You read books, magazines, large newspapers. Now there is one thing I want to ask you: Which part is it you read—the black or the white?'"

The Fringe of Art.

Elihu Vedder, the painter, lives in Rome, where he has a beautiful apartment, and in Capri, where his white villa looks down on the sea. "Elihu Vedder," said a New York illustrator the other day, "is as bohemian as ever. Fame has not spoiled him. I visited him last year, and his bohemian ways were delightful. 'You know they tell a story of a visit that he once paid to Alma Tadema in London, at that glittering house which Mrs. A. T.'s money, made in grateful, comforting cocoa, bought. 'The morning after his arrival, very early, before even the servants were up, Vedder came with a thunderous knocking on his host's sandalwood door. 'Alma Tadema turned in his gold bed, threw back the lace coverlet, sat up. 'Who's there? What is it?' he cried, in a startled voice. 'I say, Tadema,' shouted Vedder, 'where

Mansfield's Rebuke.

A group of theatrical men were talking in New York about the late Richard Mansfield.

"Mr. Mansfield," said one "was a delightful humorist, a splendid raconteur in society, but at the same time he had a certain proper and becoming sense of his own dignity, and it never failed to be unduly familiar with him."

"He was, as we all know, rather bald. He resented, from barbers or friends, any allusion to his baldness. 'Well, one night at a party a man came up behind this great artist, staggered him with a violent slap on the back, and exclaimed in a loud, jovial, familiar voice: 'Hello, Dick. How are you? Every time I see you get bald and baldier.' 'Mansfield drew himself up. He sneered at the other.

"Hello," he said. "I don't know who you are, but every time I see you get ruder and ruder."

The Mirage of Marriage.

Miss Marie Cahill chose the chorus girls for her new play, "Marrying Mary," by measurement. The Bertillon system was employed.

"By this excellent system of measurement," said Miss Cahill the other day, "one gets, in a chorus girl, the real thing. Mirage is a revelation. You know what a mirage is? Quite sure? Well, at any rate, I'll point out its meaning to you with a story: 'A boy looked up from his book one night. 'Father,' he said, 'what is a mirage?' 'The father answered glibly from behind his paper. 'The union of a man and woman till death or the law them do part.' 'But,' said the boy, 'that's marriage, ain't it?' 'Same thing, sonny: it's the same thing,' replied the father. 'A man imagines he sees wonders and delights where there is nothing. Fight shy of 'em both, my boy.'"

But They Kept the Nickel.

President Shonts of the Interborough Company of New York said at a recent dinner: "A public servant does his best to please the public. As time passes, its service continually improves. Nevertheless, when the public servant happens to be a street railway, it is but natural that its cars should be more crowded in the rush than in the idle hours."

Mr. Shonts smiled. "And crowded cars mean complaints, don't they, the world over?" he said. "I remember once being on a crowded car in Cincinnati. 'A man hung to a strap near me. He was a polite man, and, to let people on and off, he kept on the move. Now he ran to the front of the car, now to the rear, now to the middle, wherever there happened to be most space. And it was plain that all this hustling and jostling and rushing to and fro made him angrier and angrier as time went on. 'He restrained his rage till he came to get off. Then, all of a sudden, it overpowered him. 'He turned to the conductor and yelled, very red in the face: 'Gimme my money back! 'What for?' said the conductor. 'You've had your ride.' 'Ride, do you call it?' barked the man. 'Why I've walked the whole blessed way.'"